



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The Mountain-Prairie Region

NEWS RELEASE

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
134 Union Boulevard
Lakewood, Colorado 80228**

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes (CSKT)

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes Making Progress in Negotiations for an Annual Funding Agreement

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes will be meeting in early September, to further negotiate a possible Annual Funding Agreement (AFA) for certain programs, functions, services and activities (Activities) on the National Bison Range and other refuges within the boundaries of the Flathead Reservation.

Although the anticipated June 30, 2003, deadline for reaching agreement on an AFA has passed, the Service and the Tribes have agreed to continue negotiations. Recently the Service's Denver Regional office sent a letter to the tribes outlining its position on a potential AFA, however, much work remains to be done before an AFA can be drafted and shared with the public.

As required by federal regulations, once the Service and the Tribes agree to an AFA, at that time it will be made available to interested members of Congress and the public for review and comment. Any input received during the 90 day comment period will be fully considered before any AFA goes into effect.

The AFA negotiations are not public meetings because they are pre-decisional, involve personnel matters and sensitive contract discussions.

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